

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3730
INFO CINCPAC
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMCONSUL MANDALAY
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
DEA BANGKOK
AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1904

E.O. 11652: GDS
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1. OPERATION MOHEIN III (LOU)
OPERATION MOHEIN III LAUNCHED JUNE 17 BY THE BURMA ARMY
AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS IN THE SHAN STATE NEAR THE THAI
BORDER APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS. THE BURMA ARMY LOCATED
AND DESTROYED FIVE OPIUM REFINERIES AND CAPTURED SUBSTANTIAL
QUANTITIES OF NARCOTICS INCLUDING 55 KILOS OF MORPHINE BASE
AND OTHER MATERIAL. FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHES STATIONED IN

RANGOON AND BURMESE JOURNALISTS WERE FLOWN TO THE SCENE OF THE OPERATION ON JUNE 30 TO VIEW THE RESULTS FIRST HAND. WHILE THERE THE ATTACHES AND NEWSMEN ALSO WITNESSED RATHER FORMAL CEREMONIES IN WHICH THE BURMESE RETURNED TO THAI AUTHORITIES ONE ROYAL THAI POLICE HELICOPTER AND 27 THAI BORDER POLICE WHO HAD INTRUDED INTO BURMESE TERRITORY DURING THE OPERATION. THIS INCIDENT HAD AT FIRST SEEMED A THREAT TO FURTHER THAI/BURMA COOPERATION AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ALONG THE BORDER, BUT AT THE CEREMONY BOTH SIDES SEEMED INTENT ON CONCLUDING THE INCIDENT ON A FAVORABLE NOTE AND EXPRESSED THE DESIRE FOR FURTHER COOPERATION IN THIS SPHERE (RANGOON 3719).

2. SOVIET EMBASSY: DISSENTION AMONG THE LOCAL RANKS (CONF)

LOCAL EMPLOYEES WITH THE PRESS AND INFORMATION SECTION OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN RANGOON ARE THREATENING TO INSTIGATE A FULL SCALE LABOR DISPUTE WITH THEIR EMPLOYER. APPARENTLY THE TROUBLE BEGAN A LITTLE OVER A MONTH AGO WHEN THE RUSSIANS FIRED ONE EMPLOYEE FROM THE SECTION BECAUSE HE HAD TRANSLATED A BOOK ABOUT CHOU EN-LAI FROM CHINESE INTO BURMESE ON HIS OWN TIME. SHORTLY THEREAFTER A SOVIET PRESS OFFICER ABOUT TO DEPART ON HOME LEAVE TOLD SOME SENIOR LOCAL EMPLOYEES THAT HE WOULD HAVE BAD NEWS WHEN HE RETURNED FROM MOSCOW, NAMELY THAT 33 LOCAL EMPLOYEES FROM THE SECTION WOULD BE DISMISSED. WHEN WORD OF THIS SPREAD AMONG THE LOCAL STAFF IT CAUSED CONSIDERABLE CONSTERNATION, AND THE EMPLOYEES BEGAN TO SEEK MEANS TO PROTEST THE PROPOSED ACTION. AT THAT POINT

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THE SOVIET EMBASSY FIRED TWO ADDITIONAL LOCAL EMPLOYEES. IT ACCUSED THEM OF BEING PRC AGENTS, BUT BURMESE OPINION HELD THEY WERE RELEASED BECAUSE THEY HAD ATTEMPTED TO ORGANIZE OPPOSITION AGAINST THE THREATENED MASS DISMISSAL. (IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT BOTH SIDES ARE RIGHT). THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE NOW OPENLY PROTESTING THE DISMISSALS AND DEMANDING THAT ALL THREE EMPLOYEES BE REINSTATED. OBVIOUSLY, THEY BELIEVE IF THEY CAN FORCE THE SOVIETS TO BACK DOWN ON THREE DISMISSALS, THE EMBASSY WOULD HARDLY DARE REMOVE 33. ADDING FUEL TO THEIR GRIEVANCES IS THE FACT THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY RECENTLY GRANTED ITS LOCAL EMPLOYEES A SUBSTANTIAL WAGE INCREASE WHILE THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY HAS HELD LOCAL WAGES AT THE SAME LEVEL FOR MANY YEARS. THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES HAVE THREATENED TO BRING THEIR GRIEVANCES TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, AND THEY MAY ALREADY HAVE DONE SO. THEY ARE ALSO THREATENING SOMETHING ALMOST UNHEARD OF IN PRESENT DAY BURMA, A STRIKE.

COMMENT: SOVIET AND GUB OFFICIALS WILL PROBABLY MANAGE TO SOMEHOW DEFUSE THE SITUATION BEFORE IT BECOMES ANY MORE EMBARRASSING. IT CERTAINLY WOULD BE DAMAGING FOR SOMEONE'S IMAGE SHOULD CITIZENS OF THIS "SOCIALIST REPUBLIC" ENGAGE IN A PUBLIC LABOR DISPUTE WITH THE EMBASSY OF ANOTHER "SOCIALIST REPUBLIC." AT ANY RATE, THE WAGE INCREASES WE GRANTED OUR LOCAL

EMPLOYEES SEEMS TO HAVE PAID AN UNEXPECTED DIVIDEND.

3. GUB FINANCE OFFICIALS TO ATTEND IMF SEMINARS IN U.S. (UNC)
TWO OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE
WILL DEPART FOR THE U.S. IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO ATTEND SEMINARS
SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND. U MYO MYINT,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR WITH THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE, WILL
ATTEND A 4 1/2 MONTH IMF STUDY PROGRAM ON FINANCE AND PLANNING
ANALYSIS. THE COURSE IS SCHEDULED FROM JULY THROUGH NOVEMBER
IN WASHINGTON, D.C. WITH SIDE TRIPS TO NEW YORK AND OTTAWA.
ANOTHER OFFICIAL, U KYAW HLAING, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BUDGET
DEPARTMENT, WILL ATTEND AN IMF SEMINAR ON PUBLIC FINANCE FROM
JULY 11 TO SEPTEMBER 16 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RANGOON 1904

4. MORE RAIN FORECAST (UNC)

THE WEATHER BUREAU FINALLY HAD SOME GOOD NEWS FOR BURMESE
FARMERS. AFTER LATE AND RELATIVELY WEAK MONSOON (WEEKAS #24
AND 23, ITEMS 4 AND 4 RESPECTIVELY), THE LONG RANGE WEATHER
FORCAST FOR JULY CALLS FOR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL IN ALMOST

ALL AREAS OF BURMA. IF THE FORECAST HOLDS, IT SHOULD MEAN THAT THIS YEAR'S PADDY CROP WILL BE LARGELY UNAFFECTED BY LESS THAN AVERAGE RAINFALL WHICH MUCH OF BURMA HAS EXPERIENCED UP UNTIL NOW. THERE HAS BEEN SUFFICIENT MOISTURE FOR MOST FARMERS TO PREPARE THEIR PADDY FIELDS AND A WET JULY SHOULD GET THE CROP OFF TO A GOOD START.

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5. NARCOTICS - ARRESTS AND SEIZURES (UNC)

TWO HUNDRED SEVENTEEN PERSONS WERE ARRESTED FOR DRUG ABUSE AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN RANGOON DURING THE PERIOD 3 - 25 JUNE. THE ARRESTS WERE PART OF A MAJOR VICE SUPPRESSION OPERATION DURING WHICH THE LOCAL POPULACE WAS ENCOURAGED TO MAIL IN ANONYMOUSLY, TIPS TO THE POLICE. TWO DRUG ADDICTS IN RANGOON WHO FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE 1974 NARCOTIC DRUG LAW REQUIREMENT FOR COMPULSORY DRUG TREATMENT WERE SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT EACH. THE MAJOR SEIZURE OF THE PAST WEEK RESULTED IN OPERATION MOHEIN III, REPORTED SEPARATELY.

OSBORN

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